Opposition to RIL SEZ in Pen town, Maharashtra

1706. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that farmers of the Pen town in Raigad district of Maharashtra are opposing the setting up of a SEZ by RIL;

(b) if so, what are the major issues on which they are protesting; and

(c) whether Government have reverted to them in any manner to address their concerns, and if so, with what result?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) A representation in this regard has been received. Main issues raised are regarding acquisition of land for the SEZ, size of SEZs, acquisition of agricultural land for the SEZ and relief and rehabilitation measures.

(c) Various issues concerning the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) policy were considered by the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGOM) in its meeting held on 5th April 2007 and it has been decided that applications for SEZs may be processed for in principle and formal approvals and notifications subject to the condition that the State Governments would not undertake any compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs. Further. it has been decided to fix the upper limit of the area required for multi-product SEZs at 5000 hectares with the provision that the State Governments may prescribe a lower limit. Ministry of Rural Development has been requested to reformulate a comprehensive Land Acquisition Act to address all relevant issues and also to work out a comprehensive Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy ensuring livelihood from the project to at least one person from each displaced family. Further, as per the information made available by the Government of Maharashtra based on a Socio Economic Survey, the land under acquisition for Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Raigad District is non-irrigated single crop saline land. However, all the State Governments have been advised that in case of land required for SEZs, first priority should be for waste and barren land and if necessary, single crop land should be considered. If perforce a portion of double cropped agricultural land has to be acquired to meet the minimum area requirements, especially for multi-product SEZs, the same should not exceed 10% of the total land required for the SEZs.

Free trade with other Nations

†1707. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the nations with whom Government has planned to do free trade;

(b) whether Government are considering to bring a few other nations in the periphery of free trade plan in future; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the details of the nations proposed/under consideration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) India is negotiating Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) nations, the European Communities (EC), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Japan, South Korea and Thailand. The Framework Agreements signed with MERCOSUR (Common Market of the South) in 2003 and Chile in 2005 also stipulate eventual negotiations for Free Trade Agreements.

(b) and (c) The feasibility of having bilateral FTAs is being discussed with China, Indonesia, Israel, Malaysia. Russia and a trilateral FTA is being discussed with MERCOSUR and SACU (Southern African Customs Union) jointly.

Delay in Scorpene Submarine project

1708. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether delay in operationalising the Scorpene Submarine project with French collaboration will deplete the present submarine fleet strength to a mere 9 by 2012;

(b) if so, whether Pakistan has already inducted 3 new French Agosta submarines and is accelerating the process of enlarging its submarine fleet;

(c) whether it is also a fact that China has a fleet of 69 submarines with one-third of them being nuclear powered; and

(d) what are the reasons for the delay in the Scorpene project?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) As per current assessment, there is no such delay in operationalising the Scorpene Submarine project.

(b) and (c) Various countries including Pakistan and China, acquire equipment including submarines for modernization of their armed forces depending on their perceived security concerns.

(d) Does not arise.

Operational unpreparedness of Prithvi and Agni Missiles

1709. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken note of the media reports regarding operational unpreparedness of the indigenously developed Prithvi and Agni missiles;

(b) if so, Government's reaction in this regard;